



Nevada Guide to Local Election Practices

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I. INTRODUCTION

This guide summarizes some of the local practices of election officials in select Nevada counties. This guide is intended to assist advocates by providing general information about the election process.

Election officials and the Nevada Secretary of State were interviewed to learn their methodology for basic procedures. The focus of the interviews was: voter registration; incomplete applications; list maintenance; poll worker training; ballot quantity; provisional ballots; ID requirements; polling place resources; machines; challenges etc.

II. CLARK COUNTY

Voter Registration:

Registration Deadlines: October 4, 2008 is the last day a voter can complete and postmark the application to register to vote. It must be received within three working days of that date in order to be considered within the deadline for processing mail-in voter registration applications. Voters who miss the deadline and wish to register may still do so in person at the Clark County Election Department from October 5 - 14, 2008.

Voter Registration Group Deadlines: For voter registration groups, October 4, 2008 is also the date in which the applications must be submitted or postmarked. They do not have until October 14, 2008 to send in applications. The applications submitted by voter registration groups will be processed within a few days (if sent in on Friday, will be processed and in system by Tuesday).

Incomplete Applications: Voter registration letters are sent to voters about missing information. If the Drivers License number or Social Security number is missing, the application is not voided, but a notice is put next to the voters name so that the poll worker can ask for Identification from the voter on Election Day. If the citizenship box is not checked, voters are registered, but they are flagged and will be asked to answer the question when they appear to vote at the polls. Most notification letters are sent because registrants failed to provide or provided an incorrect birth date, birth year, or address.

Election Day

Poll Worker Allocation: In the 2004 General Election, several poll workers did not show up on Election Day, resulting in numerous areas with a shortage of workers. In particular, some areas were missing over 50% of their bi-lingual poll workers. The County now has a contingency plan in place and have been recruiting more poll workers for 2008.

New Touch Screen Machines: In 1994, Clark County began to transition to electronic voting but still had paper punch hole ballots. In 1996, elections in Clark County were done 100% via electronic voting machines. Sequoia touch screen machines debuted in 2002, but were mixed with the optical scan machines used previously. In 2006, there were 4,500 touch screen machines in Clark County.

Machine Allocation: There is a heavy ratio of machines to voters (predicted turnout of registered voters). Clark County estimates that about 40% of all voters will vote in early voting or via absentee ballots. Thus, the remaining 60% (including a 20% growth rate from 2004) are predicted to turnout at a 40% rate and machines are allocated at a rate of 80 projected voters to 1 machine.

In case of machine failure, Clark County has a contingency plan with several options. There are emergency paper ballots at every precinct. In addition, roving teams of technicians are available to repair machines and replace them with extra machines that can be transported to polling place locations. In addition, there are several roving polling places (mobile trailers) with additional

machines on board that can be transported to any polling place in Clark County, Nevada.

Average Vote Time: It should take 2-3 minutes for each voter to vote.

Provisional Ballots

Provisional Ballots: Approximately, 4,000 provisional ballots were used in 2004 and 1,000 were counted. Many of the voters were not on the rolls. Sufficient provisional ballots will be available at the polls for 2008 and additional ones will be available at the Elections Department and can be sent to polling places if necessary.

As long as a voter is in the same Congressional District as she is registered, her provisional ballot will count.

Provisional ballots are downloaded on a floppy disk after the end of election night. There are also paper roster books. Voters have until the Friday after elections to provide ID for those who voted provisionally because they did not provide necessary identification.

Challenges

The Registrar said they were not expecting mass challenges of voter registrations since there were not many in 2004 or 2006. The mass challenge list can be requested from the Registrar's office after October 10, 2008. There has been no history of voter challenges at the polls in the last 10 years.

Police at the Polls

Clark County does not have police at the polling place except to direct traffic. The Registrar is unaware of any plan to have police present at the polls.

Paper Ballots

The Registrar is confident that there will be sufficient back up machines, batteries, roving polling locations, and technical teams to deal with several precincts going down. There are sufficient paper ballots for 5 polling places. However, if there is a massive power failure, there are not enough paper ballots for every single voter in every precinct. There are not sufficient paper ballots for all voters because of financial concerns. The ballots cost \$2.25 per ballot and Clark County does not have the resources to print one for each voter.

Machine Allocation

The ratio of machines to voters is 1 to 80 in Clark County as opposed to 1 to 130 in Washoe County. Clark County does not have state funding to purchase voting machines. The Registrar stated that all other counties receive state funding.

Machine Accuracy

Machines are tested and calibrated before and after each election. If machines are inaccurately programmed, the mistake would result in a county-wide problem and not be limited to one machine.

Poll Worker Recruitment

Clark County has the 4,400 poll workers needed for the 2008 election and has a standby list for any additional poll workers who sign up. Additionally, there are high school students ready as emergency poll workers who will be stationed at the Clark County Elections Division and can be deployed as needed.

Foreclosure

Voters who lost their homes to foreclosure cannot be challenged and will be able to vote if they moved within their same county.

III. SECRETARY OF STATE GUIDELINES

Election Integrity Task Force

- The Election Integrity Task Force is a partnership between the Secretary of State's office and the FBI. It was created to respond to complaints about registration and voting on Election Day in preparation for the 2008 General Election which is anticipated to be a huge and historic election. Its purpose is to protect the integrity of the electoral process in Nevada and to learn about any problems before they learn about them through the local media. The plan is to coordinate communication and avoid jurisdictional issues.
- The Secretary of State's Office requests that any additional laws or public concern that they need to be aware should be brought to its attention in advance of November 4, 2008.
- The Task Force operates out of the Secretary of State's office and includes plain clothes police officers who do civil investigations for the Secretary's office but are trained and used on Election Day to assess and diffuse potential problems. The goal of the Task Force is to really act more as observers and reporters and be able to address issues of voters having problems at the polls.

Poll Observer Pledge

- The Secretary of State agreed to issue a directive to county clerks in Nevada that "Election Protection" or "Vote – Ask me How" t-shirts and similar non-partisan, non-affiliated clothing would be a non-issue on Election Day.

The Impact of Foreclosure on Voting in Nevada

- The Secretary of State's representatives agree that the laws in Nevada are much more favorable towards voters who have changed residence, because of foreclosure or other reasons, and thus such voters should be educated that they can still vote.